



# CITY OF DECATUR ILLINOIS

#1 GARY K. ANDERSON PLAZA

DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62523-1196

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2022

## **City Council approves Small Housing Improvement Program, public safety initiatives**

Decatur, IL – Highlights from the September 6, 2022 Decatur City Council meeting include a new Small Housing Improvement Program in partnership with Northeast Community Fund, and a number of initiatives to support the Decatur Police Department and improve public safety.

### **Small Housing Improvement Program**

The Decatur City Council on Tuesday approved a new housing repair program to continue their commitment of Neighborhood Revitalization. The Small Housing Improvement Program is a partnership with Northeast Community Fund (NECF) that targets housing rehabilitation in the city's urban core.

This program will allow NECF to provide small repair grants to owner-occupied residents in low-to moderate-income neighborhoods. The grants will not exceed \$15,000 per housing unit. This is an attempt to invest in areas within the urban core that are not eligible for the City's owner-occupied rehabilitation program, but are areas where City staff is starting to see the first signs of housing decline. This is a preventative measure. If we do not assist in these areas now, our housing challenges could continue to spread and more neighborhoods could begin to decline.

The program is part of the City's Economic & Community Development Department and is being funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) monies. The City Council allocated \$450,000 to start. If it proves to be a popular and effective program, the Council could consider providing additional funds in the future.

More information about how to apply will be coming soon.

### **Initiatives to Support Police/Public Safety**

Also on Tuesday, the Council approved several resolutions intended to improve public safety and

support the Decatur Police Department (DPD):

- An authorization for the City Manager to amend the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Police Union (PBPA). These measures are intended to help the department combat the challenges of recruiting new officers. If agreed upon by both parties, changes would include, but are not limited to:
  - A temporary expansion of the residency rules to 40 miles from DPD headquarters. This expansion will automatically sunset back to corporate limits of Macon County on January 1, 2027.
  - A 2023 scheduled wage increase from 2.25% to 3.25%, and a 3% increase in 2024.
  - New language added to the CBA giving the City more flexibility to hire civilians to perform law enforcement functions that do not require the employee to be a sworn police officer.
  
- The Council allocated just over \$130,000 for DPD to upgrade their body-worn cameras and related equipment, as well as the digital evidence system. City Council first approved body cameras in 2020.
  
- An intergovernmental agreement between DPD and the Macon County Sheriff's Office (MSO) to form a Street Crimes Task Force. This arrangement builds on an already-established Narcotics Task Force and will allow DPD and MSO to benefit from each other, through equipment, manpower, knowledge, and experience. This agreement will enhance the abilities of both agencies to combat criminal activity in Decatur and Macon County.

## **Other business**

More demolitions of vacant properties. This time, Council approved an agreement with Parkland Environmental for the demolition of two more vacant buildings. Demolitions will continue to be a regular item on Council agendas as they focus on Neighborhood Revitalization and removing blight from the City's neighborhoods.

An agenda item regarding a potential "Wash & Win" redevelopment on W. Grand and IL Rt. 48 was removed from the agenda due to the business representative being ill.

More information about these topics can be found in the City Council Agenda packet, downloadable/viewable here: [www.decaluril.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/](http://www.decaluril.gov/mayor-and-council/council-meetings/)

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